



HARTFORD POLICE UNION

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PRESIDENT RICHARD HOLTON

Office of The President

Statement of

THE HARTFORD POLICE UNION

To the

PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE

Good morning Senator Hartley, Representative Dargan and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. My name is Richard Holton, a Sergeant in the Hartford Police Department with 16 years of policing experience. I am also the President of the Hartford Police Union, the largest independent municipal police union in the state. On behalf of all the members of the Hartford Police Union, which is comprised of Patrolmen, Detectives, Sergeants, Lieutenants and Captains, we appreciate your service and dedication and wish to thank you for raising House Bill #5247 An Act Concerning the Penalty for Assault of A Public Safety, Emergency Medical, Public Transit Personnel or Health Care Personnel.

Each day Police Officers, courageous men and women, across this state and country come to work and put their lives on the line, whether it's during a traffic stop, a special detail, civil unrest, domestic disturbance, dealing with a suspicious person or the handling and transportation of prisoners. They kiss their wives, husbands and children good bye not knowing what they will face or even if they will return home.

I have come before you over the last few years and testified in favor of sentencing bills for individuals who assault Police Officers. I am here again asking you to pass this legislation once more.

Over these past two years there have been 9 incidents in the Capitol City alone where Officers were shot, shot at or had to discharge their firearms in the line of duty, with most of these incidents occurring in 2010.

These recent incidents illustrate the dangers of the police profession whether it's in an urban environment or in a suburban neighborhood.

- According to the most recent Department of Justice, Uniformed Crime Report, the average number of Police Officers assaulted every year varies between 53 to 60 thousand Officers a year.
- In 2010 there were 59 Officers Murdered in the line of duty, a 21% increase from 2009.
- In 2011 there were 68 Officers Murdered in the line of duty, a 15% INCREASE FROM 2010.
- The rate of Officers Assaulted each year averages 10.0 assaults per 100 sworn officers.



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- In 2009 Hartford P.D. had 82 Officers assaulted in the line of duty equating to 49% of the Dept. actively engaged in field work and 11% of Officers assaulted in the state that year.
- In 2010 Hartford P.D. had 107 Officers assaulted in the line of duty equating to 63.5% of the Dept. actively engaged in field work and 14% of the Officer assaulted in the state that year.
- To date there have been at least 14 Officers Killed in the line of duty this year (2012).

It continues to be the perception of my membership that the majority of individuals charged with assaulting a Police Officer will not be fully prosecuted. Court statistics show that most of the individuals charged with assaulting a Police Officer will have their charges reduced, combined or even nolleed.

Police Officers, who are victims of Assaults, are routinely not advised of their rights afforded to them as victims, and they are arguably one of the most pervasive victim classes in the country. *Since 2000 to 2011 there have been 697,976 Police officers assaulted in this country.*

In the past there have been comments made to the media by individuals advocating the assaulting or the killing of a Police Officer and these comments should not and cannot be tolerated by the society we serve.

Our members are expected to confront and address many members of society whose behavior is resistant, cruel, brutal, sadistic and violent. Police Officers see and face what most of society fears on a daily basis. When society is near the edge of falling into chaos it is these brave individuals who keep society from going over that edge. They see and deal with the underbelly of society, and when they are attacked or assaulted in the performance of their duties the remaining segment of society must stand up and denounce those actions.

We believe it is the role of our Law Makers to provide additional deterrents to those individuals in society who resist these efforts at the risk of injury and assault on our Public Safety Officers. Not only do their actions affect the Officer but the Officer's family, the Department as well as the rest of the community. This legislation is not intended to make examples of individuals but to hold them accountable for their actions, which will send a clear message to those individuals who wish to do harm and create chaos, that when they attack/assault the very individuals charged with keeping our society safe there will be severe consequences.

I thank and applaud you for taking up this cause once more.